

Smart Growth Implementation Assistance

2006 Request for Applications (RFA)

The National Sea Grant College Program in NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research is offering small grants to Sea Grant Programs who partner with a local community to help the local community develop in ways that meet environmental and other community goals. In addition, the Development, Community and Environment Division (DCED) in U.S. EPA's Office of Policy Economics and Innovation will provide smart growth implementation assistance to the selected applicants and local community partners. Eligible entities are Sea Grant Programs who have partnered with tribal, local, regional, and state governments, and nonprofit organizations that have a demonstrated partnership with a governmental entity.

SMART GROWTH

Coastal communities all over the United States are using the principles of smart growth to protect and enhance their natural environment while their economies prosper. They are reusing previously developed land; providing more housing and transportation choices; preserving critical natural areas; and developing vibrant places to live, work, shop, and play. These techniques can protect our air, water, and land and enhance quality of life while accommodating growth, as the following examples demonstrate:

- A new development in Florida transformed a former shopping mall and parking lots into 272 apartments and townhouses, 270,000 square feet of office space, and 245,000 square feet of retail space. The new development decreased the amount of paved surface by approximately 15 percent by adding a central plaza, flower and tree planters, and a large public amphitheater. Reducing paved surfaces at the site reduces the amount of polluted runoff while accommodating necessary growth.
- Research comparing three in-town neighborhoods in a Pacific Northwest city against the rest of the region showed strong links between compact, mixed-use development and travel choices. With more transportation options, residents of the compact neighborhoods traveled 28 percent fewer miles by car than residents of adjacent neighborhoods, and 35 percent fewer miles than residents of outlying areas. Shorter and fewer car trips can lead to fewer auto emissions, cleaner air, and less time spent in traffic.
- New Jersey encourages development in places with existing infrastructure, which strengthens communities and preserves rural cultures and economies. By doing so, the state will save 68,000 acres of agricultural land and 45,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land from development.

Development practices that reflect the principles of smart growth support national environmental and public health goals by protecting sensitive watersheds, minimizing water quality impacts from development, reducing air emissions by increasing transportation choices, and encouraging cleanup and sustainable redevelopment of brownfields.

Smart growth is often characterized by a common set of principles:

- mix land uses;
- take advantage of compact building design;
- create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
- create walkable neighborhoods;
- foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place;
- preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas;
- strengthen and direct development towards existing communities;
- provide a variety of transportation choices;
- make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective; and
- encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.

For more information on smart growth, please visit the EPA web site at:

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth

IMPLEMENTING SMART GROWTH

Populations in coastal watersheds are growing rapidly, with 55 percent of the U.S. population already living within 50 miles of a coast. The environmental impacts of development directly affect the ability of communities to balance natural resource protection with economic growth. The pressures of coastal growth also profoundly affect the ability of NOAA to achieve national goals for sustainable management of coastal resources.

NOAA responded to this challenge in 2001 when it created the Coastal Community Development program within its Sea Grant Extension Program. The purpose of this program is to provide leadership in helping coastal communities address all issues related to land development and coastal resources. This new program builds off the successes and current capacity of existing Sea Grant programs and tackles one of the largest threats to coastal resources – the rapid growth and development of coastal communities.

CCD agents engage in a wide range of activities designed to support community leaders as they make development-related decisions. Examples of these activities include, but are not limited to: creating advisory groups, explaining how planning impacts natural resources, facilitating processes designed to address some aspect of land use planning and development, making recommendations on what plans or processes could be changed to better protect natural resources, and resolving or answering technical issues that arise. In short, CCD agents provide leadership and assistance to communities in areas grappling with environmental impacts from development.

The purpose of this RFA is to build Sea Grant capacity to be proactive on development-related environmental impacts and to work with states and localities to help them better plan where and how to grow and develop in order to protect local and regional coastal and natural resources.

Coastal communities around the country are interested in fostering economic growth, protecting their environmental resources, enhancing public health, and planning for development, but they may lack the tools, resources, or information to achieve these goals. In response to this demand, NOAA

will award three grants to Sea Grant Programs who partner with local communities that want to incorporate smart growth techniques in their development. In addition, each selected applicant will receive EPA-provided direct technical assistance from national experts to assist with implementing the proposed project. This assistance from NOAA and EPA is intended to help communities overcome roadblocks to smart growth by providing evaluation tools and expert analysis.

NOAA is soliciting applications from Sea Grant Programs who partner with coastal communities that want assistance with either policy analysis (e.g., reviewing state and local codes, school siting guidelines, transportation policies, etc.) or public participatory processes (e.g., visioning, alternatives analysis, build-out analysis, etc.). This assistance could support, but is not limited to, the follow types of initiatives:

- Education campaign to public officials or local residents about smart growth and its potential to support community development.
- Audit of current transportation, water quality, or land use policies and their ability to support the principles of smart growth.
- Pedestrian accessibility analysis – walk-through of a selected town area to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility.
- Review of community comprehensive plan for compatibility with the principles of smart growth.
- Facilitating public meeting about smart growth and its potential application to town development.
- Facilitating a community visioning process for a selected town area.

Successful applicants will also receive direct technical assistance, up to a value of \$17,000, to assist with implementation of the proposed project. The technical assistance will include an onsite visit from selected experts organized by EPA to work with local leaders. EPA will provide this assistance through an Agency contract vehicle, not a grant. Team members will be nationally known experts in disciplines to be determined by the community's unique needs. One example of assistance would be a team visit where the experts work with the local staff to study the community and the specific project and meet with representatives of different sectors. The team will present preliminary findings to the community and work with the community to deliver a final report to support the implementation of the principles of smart growth.

In addition, NOAA's Sea Grant Office will award three grants of a maximum of \$17,000 each to the selected Sea Grant Programs. Because these are grants under the National Sea Grant College Program, a minimum match of 50 percent of the federal Sea Grant funds (e.g., \$8,500 if the full \$17,000 is requested) is required, following the standard Sea Grant College Program guidelines for match requirements. The Sea Grant funds, along with the matching funds, should be used to defray the wide range of costs associated with either the policy analysis or public participatory process. For example, the grant funds could be used to defray Sea Grant staff expenses associated with the proposed project, the travel expenses of the technical assistance team (if needed beyond the funds for contractor assistance described above), costs associated with the consulting team's work in the community, such as printing or rental space for community meetings, or to contract for additional time of consultants.

This RFA will only be made available to Sea Grant Programs. Sea Grant extension programs and agents/specialists are encouraged to apply, including Coastal Community Development, Urban Coasts, Coastal Hazards and all other Sea Grant extension programs. While this RFA is being made available only to Sea Grant Programs, the community will be the ultimate recipient of the services offered.

Selected applicants receive both the NOAA National Sea Grant Office grant and the EPA-led technical assistance. It is expected that these combined resources be used to address one project for the local community partner.

For example, a Sea Grant Coastal Community Development program specialist could be an applicant under this RFA. However, the specialist must partner with a local community group, such as the local Department of Planning and Permitting, which needs assistance to help a neighborhood for the redevelopment of its town center. If this application were selected, the Department of Planning and Permitting and the neighborhood would be the primary recipients of the technical assistance provided by EPA. Sea Grant's role in this process will be to facilitate the partnerships between the local entities and to offer extension and outreach expertise before, during, and after the EPA-led technical assistance process.

NOAA plans to assist three Sea Grant-identified coastal communities in 2006. NOAA anticipates announcing the selected application in spring 2006. The work with each selected Sea Grant Program and partner community will occur over a period of twelve months, starting in approximately spring/summer 2006. The lessons learned from these projects will be used to help other communities with similar challenges. Communities will be chosen based on the criteria described below.

The NOAA Sea Grant College Program expects to have a total of \$50,000 available for grants under this RFA, subject to the FY 06 budget appropriation. NOAA expects to award approximately three assistance agreements under this solicitation. EPA will support the three selected sites with contractor support. US EPA expects to have approximately \$50,000 available for contractor assistance under this RFA for this funding cycle, subject to availability of funding within the Agency's FY 06 budget.

PREPARING THE APPLICATION

NOAA will evaluate applications based on the criteria listed below. In addition, the project description should be very specific and clearly identify the challenge the community is facing and the specific activities that would be most helpful from the technical assistance team. When developing the project description, the applicant should assume a maximum \$17,000 grant from NOAA plus a required match, and a \$17,000 limit on the technical assistance to be provided. These numbers are provided as estimates for planning purposes; however, the actual dollar amount may be higher or lower depending on NOAA's and EPA's budgets, project complexity, and number of projects funded.

The criteria listed below will be used to do a preliminary review of the applications. Following this initial review, NOAA and EPA will conduct conference calls with finalists. These calls will be used to further evaluate the extent to which the applicant is successful in meeting the criteria. NOAA will make final selections following the completion of the conference calls.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. The applicant must be a recognized Sea Grant program. Given the broad and community-based nature of Sea Grant extension programs, NOAA will accept multiple applications from a Sea Grant Program provided that each application defines a separate and distinct project with a separate and distinct local community partner.
2. The applicant must partner with 1) a tribal, state, local, or regional government; or (2) an incorporated nonprofit organization incorporated or domiciled in the United States that has a demonstrated partnership with a governmental agency. Community partners must be located in, and project activities must be conducted within, the United States, Puerto Rico, or a territory or possession of the U.S. The local partner must be clearly identified in the application.
3. Elected officials – mayors, county commissioners, city council members, state commissioners, etc. – must support this project and be committed to its success. The response to this request for applications will require a letter of support from the primary elected official in the community, as well as a list of other elected officials who support it.
4. Applicants should include letters of support from the principal partners in the local team that will be assisting the EPA-led team and directing follow-up activities. For example, if the community partner is a local governmental department, the applicant must include a letter of support from the director of the department or mayor. If the community partner is a state agency, this letter should be from the agency head or another high-ranking manager who will have responsibility for carrying out the project. If the community partner is a nonprofit organization, the letter should come from the chief operating officer of the organization.
5. EPA-led technical assistance will be provided to integrate the principles of smart growth into local planning processes to promote infill development. The assistance must relate to policy analysis or public participatory processes that will improve the overall climate for brownfields redevelopment as well as revitalization of other infill sites. NOAA will not consider applications that have a principal purpose of providing training, research, and technical assistance to individuals and organizations to facilitate the inventory of brownfield sites, site assessments, remediation of brownfield sites, site preparation, or community involvement associated with the cleanup, assessment, or inventory of brownfield properties.
6. The application must describe how the results from the technical assistance team's work will be used to implement changes locally. The application should discuss how the community partner would be able to implement any of the changes.

7. The Sea Grant Program and the community partner must have a demonstrated understanding of and commitment to the principles of smart growth. The application should describe actions that have been taken by the community partner to address the location and design of development, regardless of whether these actions have been successful. NOAA is looking for communities that have already learned about the principles of smart growth and now want implementation assistance.
8. The community partner must clearly be facing a development-related challenge, whether it involves growth pressures, attracting more development, or planning for the future, and must have identified opportunities for changing the way it handles growth. The application should include a discussion of growth conditions in the community, as well as assets for and challenges to implementing smart growth practices. The application should also specify the type of assistance (policy analysis or public participatory processes) being requested and how it will be applied, as well as outline how local implementation will follow the technical assistance.
9. The community partner must have a specific, clearly defined project, and there must be a clear role for a team to assist with policy analysis or public participation. Examples might include, but are not limited to: a pending update to zoning codes; creating a school facility master plan; crafting policies that allow or encourage specific smart growth techniques (e.g., transit-oriented development, infill, etc.); meeting a statutory deadline on stormwater ordinances; conducting a visioning event for redevelopment; or creating build-out analysis. Applicants must describe the project, discuss how it relates to local and regional growth, and explain how its success would affect the community's environmental, social, and economic health. NOAA and EPA will work with each selected Sea Grant Program and community to develop a detailed statement of work to ensure that the contract support maximizes the expert assistance available to the community.
10. The Sea Grant Program and community partner must form a local team to work with the EPA-led expert team and to follow up on the technical assistance provided. This local team should include representatives from most sectors of the community, including government, business, public interest groups, civic associations, and individual citizens. Applicants should submit letters of support and participation from the principal partners on the team, signed by an individual who has authority to commit the organization to the project. The EPA-led team will likely be in the community for only a few days. Over the full course of the project, the Sea Grant Program and the community partner must work together to prepare for, carry out, and follow up on the EPA-led process. The application must demonstrate the dedication and vision to succeed. Applicants should also specify which staff would work on this project before and during the team visit, and during the follow-up period.
11. Although this assistance will be free to the community, Sea Grant Programs and community partners that can show local commitment through partnerships, such as local government staff time, support from local businesses, and other local resources, will have priority in the selection process. Applicants should include a list of local supporters and describe any previous collaboration on growth and development issues, if applicable. Applicants should

also mention any other technical assistance programs or grants for which they may be applying.

Geographic and programmatic distribution within the Sea Grant Program may be factors considered in the final selection of awards.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

To be considered complete and eligible for review, all applications must include a cover letter, summary page, project description, letter of support from the community's primary elected official, and documentation of partner participation. All parts of the application must be submitted together. The following format is required:

Cover letter (does not count against page limit)

The cover letter that accompanies your application must be signed by the Sea Grant Director and should be written on official letterhead.

Summary page (no longer than one page and does not count against the page limit)

The summary page should clearly include project title, contact information for the project manager, type of assistance requested (policy analysis or public participation), name of Sea Grant Program and the community partner, and short abstract of the project description.

Project description (no longer than five page sides)

The request for assistance must describe the project clearly and specifically. The narrative must provide a concise overview of the project, including how it ties into larger issues of local or regional growth and how the NOAA-EPA assistance will support the project. The description must detail local support for action and resources (e.g., staff time, support from business, cost sharing, etc.) that the Sea Grant Program and community will bring to the project. The narrative must also address how the application meets each of the criteria and what environmental results the applicant expects. If other project partners or funding sources are involved, their roles and contributions must be clearly defined. In reviewing the project description, reviewers will not consider any pages over the 5-page-side limit. Project descriptions must use no smaller than 10-point type and should have page margins all around of at least one inch.

Estimated project costs (not included in page limit)

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals for activities that comply with the budget parameters below. Applicants are required to submit a one-page budget that will detail the total estimated project costs. Applicants must provide detail on how the following funding sources will be spent:

- (1) NOAA Sea Grant Program federal funds up to \$17,000;
- (2) Required Sea Grant matching funds;
- (3) EPA-provided contractor technical assistance up to \$17,000 (assume an average hourly rate of \$100/hour); and

- (4) Any additional resources provided by the community partners or the Sea Grant program, including support from the private sector, additional funds, staff time, etc

The Sea Grant funds, along with the matching funds, should be used to defray the wide range of costs associated with proposed project. For example, the grant funds could be used to defray Sea Grant staff out-of-pocket expenses associated with the proposed project, the travel expenses of the technical assistance team, costs associated with the consulting team's work in the community, such as printing or rental space for community meetings, or to contract for additional time of consultants.

Letter of support from elected official (not included in page limit)

Applicants should include a letter of support from the primary elected official in the community (e.g., mayor, county commission chair). If the applicant is a state government agency, the letter should be from the head of the agency or a representative who will be directing the project.

Documentation of partner participation (not included in page limit)

Applicants should include letters of support from the principal partners in the local team that will be assisting the EPA-led team and directing follow-up activities.

NOAA must receive applications, including all supporting letters, by 5:00PM Eastern Standard Time, Friday January 6, 2006. No late applications will be accepted. **Applicants must submit one original and five copies of application.** All applications must be submitted in accordance with the requirements described above. No fax submissions will be accepted. Postmarks or meters will not be considered sufficient documentation of on-time delivery.

Applications should be sent to:

Jim Murray
National Sea Grant Office
NOAA, R/SG
1315 East West Highway, #11702
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 713 2431

Please note that there may be substantial delays in United States Postal Service delivery to NOAA due to heightened security screening.

If you have questions about this solicitation, please contact:

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